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Hypocrite Elon Musk profited from government surveillance while pretending to fight it

04/01/2024 // Ethan Huff // **1K** Views

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African-American electric vehicle (EV) guru Elon Musk is a hypocrite when it comes to what he *says* versus what he *does*, especially concerning government surveillance.

While talking big against government intrusion of privacy, Musk's X platform, formerly known as Twitter, is [a government spying machine](#) that generates lots of cash for Musk and his associates.

Ten years ago, then-Twitter filed a lawsuit against the government in the hopes of forcing transparency concerning Washington's abusive surveillance of social media users. That litigation continued until last fall, even as X continued all the while to profit from government surveillance of social media.

The Intercept ran an in-depth investigative piece about Musk's hypocrisy on this issue, including a petition from X's attorneys last September that the federal government stop intruding into people's lives.

"History demonstrates that the surveillance of electronic communications is both a fertile ground for government abuse and a lightning-rod political topic of intense concern to the public," the lawyers wrote before the court ultimately declined to take up the case, prompting Musk to tweet:

"Disappointing that the Supreme Court declined to hear this matter."

(Related: Back in 2017, we were [warning that](#) Elon Musk is a fast-talking hustler who has been bilking U.S. taxpayers for many years.)

Musk the deceiver

The Intercept filed a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request to uncover the truth about what is really going on inside the belly of X, regardless of Musk's rhetoric. That request blows major holes in Musk's perceived integrity on government surveillance matters.

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It turns out that X continues to profit from the sale of user data for government surveillance purposes, as revealed in emails between the U.S. Secret Service and the surveillance firm Dataminr. And X has *been* profiting from the sale of user data for government surveillance purposes even as Musk talks about a big anti-surveillance game in public.



Dataminr, which has long touted its "special relationship" with X, continuously monitors public activity on both the former Twitter platform and other social media and internet platforms.

"Dataminr provides its customers with customized real-time 'alerts' on desired topics, giving clients like police departments a form of social media omniscience," *The Intercept* reports.

"The alerts allow police to, for instance, automatically track a protest as it moves from its planning stages into the streets, without requiring police officials to do any time-intensive searches."

"Although Dataminr defends First Alert, its governmental surveillance platform, as a public safety tool that helps first responders react quickly to sudden crises, the tool has been repeatedly shown to be used by police to monitor First Amendment-protected online political speech and real-world protests."

What makes Dataminr's relationship with X unique is that, unlike with other platforms where it has to scrape user content, X allows Dataminr to pay for direct access to the company's data, which it calls a "firehose," meaning a direct, unfiltered feed of every single item of user content shared publicly to the platform.

Having special access to this firehose data is how Dataminr has been able to sell its services to the government, mind you. Without it, Dataminr would be just another data-scraping service like any other.

Even after Musk took over X, talking a big game about ending the corruption of former Twitter, Dataminr has continued to do the same thing it has always done with the firehose, proving Musk a hypocrite.

"While it was unclear whether, under Musk, X would continue leasing access to its users to Dataminr – and by extension, the government – the emails from the Secret Service confirm that, as of last summer, the social media platform was still very much in the government surveillance business," *The Intercept* warns.

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